


Ancient Greek Coins

Pt. Xi-xiv. Sicily



FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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Ancient Greek Coins



ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

ANCIENT GREEK COINS

XII
SICILY, 2

BY
FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



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ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

XI. SICILY, I.



WE have seen that, taken as a whole, the coin issues which illustrate the various political phases of that brilliant, changeable, many-fortuned Syracuse, excel those of every other city, state or dynasty throughout the Greek world, in presenting a rare combination of beauty, variety, and historical sequence. Yet this marked superiority need not diminish our anticipations of interest and enjoyment as we approach the further consideration of Sicilian civic coinages, for there will appear so many examples, surpassed only by the masterpieces which form the subject of the last six articles, that several papers may profitably be devoted to studying the issues of Akragas, Gela, Katane, Messana, Selinous and kindred cities of Sicily, during the flourishing years of their varied independent existence. In its widest range this embraced, as in the case of Syracuse, the fifth, fourth and third centuries prior to the Christian era.

Before entering however upon this pleasing pursuit, in order that we may possess a more perfect acquaintance with such striking historical events as

eager to realize his life-dream of being, like his greater brother, worshipped as a genuine founder, drove forth from Katane all her Chalkidic inhabitants, then as oikist reseeded the now solitary city with fresh settlers of his own race, and to crown the illusion rechristened this new foundation, giving it a name already world-renowned as borne by the overshadowing mountain. Thus it was in honor of "King Hieron, founder of Aitna," that Pindar composed the first Pythian ode, in which he celebrates his patron's chariot victory at Delphi two years later; and the rare civic coins of this period are all inscribed AITNAION.

Hieron's welcome death, however, soon brought renewed independence, and the city, once again Katane and free, enjoyed her full share of the general Sicilian prosperity for the next half century. Forced in 415 to become an ally of the invaders from the mother country, and occupied by the Athenians as headquarters during the entire war, Katane cannot however have shared their disastrous fate; for we hear of her forces again warring, not unsuccessfully, with Syracuse, several years after the crushing Athenian overthrow.

The next foe was however not to be so easily repulsed, being no less a conqueror than Dionysios, who having gained possession of the place by treachery, proceeded at once with his usual cold-blooded thoroughness, to sell the entire population into slavery, and to reseed with his Italian mercenaries these dwellings, for the second time empty.

Thus in 402 Katane ceased to exist as a Greek city, and with this extinction of Hellenic life there comes to an end as a consequence her century of Greek coin-issues. These we shall find marked by interesting contrasts, certain types displaying strong and noble qualities, while other examples are distinguished by every extreme of that delicate refinement so characteristic of Sicilian engravers.

KATANE.

148. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. Before 476 B. C. (Pl. XIV: 1.) Obv. Man-headed bull kneeling to right on right knee; on his back, Seilenos kneeling to right with left arm outstretched; in exergue, sea-monster: border of dots. Rev. KATANAION Winged Nike advancing to left, bearing fillet in extended right hand.

(From the London sale, May, 1900; No. 87.)

The coinage of Katane opens with this remarkable issue, of whose types unfortunately no certain explanation can be offered. The man-headed bull — Mr. Hill infers from the bent knee that, like the bull of Gela, he is swimming — symbolizes of course, as in those Geloan designs (Nos. 131-134), the rushing river of the place. But the exact significance of the kneeling or running figure of Seilenos above seems yet undiscovered, — unless as in the case of the next coin, some local myth brought from the mother city is suggested — while the same doubt exists regarding the sea-monster below. It will be remembered that Hieron I, of Syracuse, by the employment of this marine symbol on his coins (Nos. 69-77), purposed to immortalize the memory of his glorious annihilation of that great Etruscan naval power, whose piratical expeditions had always imperilled Hellenic prosperity in the western Mediterranean. The ancient historians give us so few details of this great achievement, that in spite of their silence in this connection we could picture to ourselves among the Syracusan allies the neighboring Katane, and could explain that the pistrix was here depicted with the same symbolism as on Hieron's issues; an hypothesis further strengthened by the full figure of Victory on the reverse. Unfortunately, however, this pleasing theory can be at once disproved, since the great sea-fight took place in 474, just two years after the temporary cessation of Katanaian coinage. For it was in 476 that Hieron had, as we have seen, depopulated the captured Katane, recolonized it, and as oikist changed the name to Aitna, always to be henceforth, as he vainly hoped, his own peculiar city.

This sea-monster then must simply refer to the maritime situation of Katane, just as the principal figure typifies the stream of Amenanos on whose banks the city stood.

149. Litra, wt. 12 grs. B. C. 476. (Pl. XIV: 2.) Obv. Head of bearded Seilenos to right, bound with wreath of vine-leaves: border of dots. Rev. KATANE Winged thunderbolt.

This interesting little coin commemorates a continued close connection with the mother city Naxos, where we shall find with surprise, when studying

Naxian issues, that the aged sottish Seilenos is represented as one of the most respected deities of the place. The date of this issue must have been almost immediately before the great change in Katane's fortunes, as is shown by the finished style of the head. The inscription is of unusual interest; as well from its peculiar letter forms, as from its giving a rare variation in the civic name; a simple nominative singular being substituted for the customary genitive plural.

150-152. Tetradrachms, wts. 267-259 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XIV : 3-5.) Obv. KATANAION Head of Apollo to right, laureate. Rev. Quadriga to right driven by male charioteer, horses walking.

(No. 151 from the Trist sale, 42.)

These issues commence with the return of the banished Katanaians to their native city in 461, and display heads of Apollo which are fine examples of Transitional work. The drunken Seilenos has now been abandoned to Naxos, and the Katanaians show their final adoption of the great Hellenic god for their principal divinity. This is not the beneficent ripener of crops, the Phoibos Apollo who watched over Leontinoi (No. 143), but that more powerful incarnation of the deity who as Apollo Archêgetês (Founder and Guide) received at the mother city Naxos divine honors in the most famous shrine of all this great island. No formal embassy to or from a Sikeliot city, no lithe-limbed contestant joyously departing for the great games of old Greece, no true-hearted hero from the mother country landing in Sicily to free from their tyrants her supplicating daughter cities, would have dared neglect the propitiatory sacrifice at this revered altar, or have ventured to anticipate success without this divine approbation.

153. Tetradrachm, wt. 267 grs. B. C. 415. (Pl. XIV : 6.) Obv. KATANAION Head of Apollo to right laureate; behind, river fish. Rev. Quadriga to right, horses in high action and crowned by flying Nike; in exergue, crayfish.

(From the Munich sale, May, 1903; No. 889.)

Although no change is yet noticeable in the types, it need hardly be suggested to the student that especial attention should be paid to this obverse,

which at a glance is seen to present one of the most pleasing heads to be found in the entire range of coin art. The refined delicacy of the features, the pensive melancholy of expression, the quiet artistic arrangement of the hair, and the graceful poise of the head produce a well-nigh matchless combination; to which charms, evident though veiled in the illustration, it may be added that the coin itself possesses a wonderful grey tone, subdued and idealized by the most tender of patinas.

Such refinement of modelling and such detail produce, it is true, a characteristic example of that effeminacy towards which more and more the beauty-loving Greeks were borne in representations of this favorite god, the peculiarly national divinity, in whom their beliefs concentrated all the most brilliant and attractive elements of their own versatile natures. For this reason one should not here seek those qualities of manly vigor or reposeful dignity, which so many examples have taught us surely to expect in heads of the adventurous Python-slayer, the stern destroyer of wicked and presumptuous men; and we must rather be grateful that our artist has grasped a heaven-sent inspiration of Apollo in his lighter moods, as the god of song, and music, and love; almost in fact as the twin brother of Aphrodite rather than of Artemis.

An interesting question arises in connection with the reverse type. Among the obverses of Hieron I, figured on plate V, appears a girlish head, No. 18, whose quadriga—not there illustrated unfortunately—is distinguished among its fellows by the superior style of its prancing horses, and by the more natural treatment of its eager charioteer. This decided artistic advance is most evident, as we study not only the contemporaneous reverse groups, but also those for the next half century, shown on the first three lines of plate VI. For in each of these a constrained stiffness of attitude marks both the slowly walking horses, and the stolid figure who is presumably urging them on. Yet the sea-monster below the quadriga of No. 18 must here, as always in that period, denote Hieron's issues, while the head fits so perfectly into its niche towards the close of his reign, as to be capable of this attribution alone.

Hieron died in 466. What then is our surprise to discover now within a few years of the Fine-Art period (the present head can surely admit no

other date) a group precisely similar in all respects — prancing posture of the horses, artistic development, and general treatment. The explanation is probably a natural one, that the later engraver inspired with that love for archaic types which at various periods was so prevalent among Greeks, selected for imitation this Syracusan model, wherein he found simplicity of treatment — the double outlines of two horses typifying four — combined with a freedom and an originality not yet attained by Katanaian issues: surely for the old artist of Hieron's reign the sincerest of compliments.

154. Tetradrachm, wt. 262 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV: 7.) Obv. KATANAIΩN Head of Apollo to left, laureate; on right, crayfish; on left, fillet with bell attached. Rev. Quadriga to left, rounding the turning-post, horses galloping, charioteer crowned by flying Nike who bears tablet inscribed EYAIN; under horses' feet, pellet; triple exergual line; in exergue, crab; border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, 286.)

We have seen (No. 142) how Euainetos left the impress of his genius on Kamarinaian issues, and during the same absence from Syracuse we find him at Katane engraving several dies, some signed as in this case, and some distinguished only by his characteristic technique. This coin is a striking example of the master's most highly finished style, charming us by the delicacy and detail of its refined head, while at the same time compelling our admiration for the character and breadth of the composition as a whole.

The crayfish, barely visible on the right, is of course the usual river symbol, but the curious object in the left field requires some explanation. One sees here a good illustration of the *tainia* or fillet with which in sacrificial ceremonies, especially that of Apollo, it was customary to adorn the heads of priests or of victims — the *Apollinis infula* of Vergil's *Aeneid*. This ornament consisted of a long flock of red and white wool, bound at intervals by white or purple ribbons which, coming together in the ring above, attached the fillet to the head. From the lower end is hanging a bell, such as was often used in the cult of Dionysos; but Mr. Hill's theory that here it is probably the private signet of a monetary magistrate, seems hardly admissible. For the custom that each presiding official should mark his coin issues with

some distinctive symbol, thus openly admitting a full responsibility for both weight and fineness, while as rare in Sicily as it was common in certain cities of Magna Graecia (Taras for example), was yet followed in neither country until some fifty or a hundred years later. Nor so early as this would a mere civic office-holder have dared attach his private seal to a purely religious symbol. May not this rather have been the copy of an actual fillet whereon the pendent bell was simply intended to accompany or punctuate with its silvery notes the ritual chant?

As Professor Gardner points out, this obverse belongs to a class of coins which justify Mr. Poole in his theory that many Sicilian die engravers were also gem cutters. He calls attention to a certain hardness about the outlines, a minuteness of detail and a narrowness of treatment which are clear proofs that the designer-engraver of this head was well accustomed to the harder surface and more restricted possibilities of intaglio work. Hypercriticism surely and needless evidence in this instance, for there can indeed exist little doubt that Euainetos engraved gems as well as coin dies. Mr. Arthur Evans has illustrated for us a sard lately found near Catania, which, presenting the group of Herakles strangling the Nemean lion, seems identical in style, character and treatment with the signed gold staters engraved by Euainetos for Syracuse.¹

The reverse, treated in a broader spirit, seems in every way admirable, unless, as in a similar instance (No. 88 of Syracuse) we should condemn as in bad taste and unworthy of such a master the inscribed tablet borne aloft in Nike's left hand. The whole group is in Euainetos' best early manner, and, while it vividly recalls his Syracusan tetradrachm, the more tumultuous action of its horses shows greater mastery of both technique and composition. Their figures are bold, well modelled and vigorous; the charioteer leans forward stimulating with the goad his off horses and restraining with the reins his near ones, that they may round, in a swift yet not disastrous whirl, the dangerous turning-post, here — the customary pillar — just visible on the extreme right of the coin.

¹ The only engraver whose signature appears on a Syracusan work has already received our unstinted gem as well as on a coin is ΦΡΤΤΙΑΔΩΣ, whose charm-praise. (Nos. 90 and 91.)

155. Drachm, wt. 65.5 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV : 8.) Obv. AMENANOS Head of youthful river-god Amenanos to left, diademed ; around, two river-fishes and crayfish. Rev. KATANAIΩN in exergue. Quadriga to right, horses galloping, charioteer crowned by flying Nike ; border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, 291.)

156. Tetradrachm, wt. 265 grs. B. C. 415-402. (Pl. XIV : 9.) Obv. KATANAIΩN Head of river-god Amenanos to left, diademed ; hair dishevelled : border of dots. Rev. Quadriga to left, horses in high action, charioteer crowned by flying Nike ; triple exergual line ; in exergue H : border of dots.

The first and smaller coin although not bearing the signature of Euainetos is also surely his work, for almost similar drachms show the cabalistic EYAIN which marks the summit of Sicilian if not of all coin art. But the head is no longer that of Apollo ; for the distinctive inscription, the dank unkempt hair, and the change from laurel wreath to diadem, all denote the river-god Amenanos, the same whom the earliest coinage represented as a man-headed beast. These two issues show in a most interesting manner their connection, distant in time, yet close in symbolism, for the god still bears on his forehead a horn, the evident survival of that which marks the old man-headed bull. Without some such logical explanation, this frequent adjunct of a personified river-god would present a puzzling problem.

The head is a charming one, with delicate ingenuous features ; and its including frame formed by the crayfish, the two fresh-water fishes, and the inscription, introduces a pleasing conceit, not of course new, but still possessing a happy symmetry as attractive as it is appropriate.

The second coin discovers the same river-god ; but its larger size accentuates the dishevelled condition of his hair, and there is now no trace of a horn ; this later representation of the local deity having finally assumed the purely human shape. Indeed the artist's whole treatment displays such bold naturalism in a theme usually approached in a spirit of pure convention as to remind us of modern rather than of Greek art instincts.



ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION

ANCIENT GREEK COINS

XV

SICILY. ς . (ZANKLE — MESSANA)

BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON

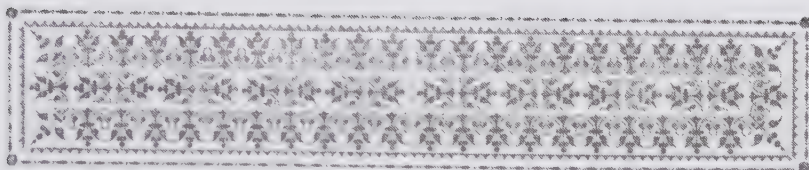


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ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

XV. SICILY, 5. (ZANKLE—MESSANA).



OUR oldest historical record of Sicily tells that at the extreme northeastern corner, where the strait is at its narrowest, there lay a spacious harbor almost enclosed by the slender promontory which curved around its waters in the shape of a reaping-hook. At this spot, the true gateway of the island, must have landed those hordes of warlike Sikels, who centuries before had been ferried across in rude rafts from their native Italian shore for the conquest of helpless Sicily; which, once accomplished, the invaders were doubtless so impressed by the importance of the site as to lose no time in establishing here their first permanent settlement.

The story of aboriginal Zankle, as it was naturally named from *zanklon*, the Sikel word for reaping-hook, was probably uneventful until broken by the appearance of the first Greek settlers. These were, however, merely private adventurers from Italy, whose informal foundation was made official by the arrival in 715 B. C., of a colonizing expedition from Chalkis and Kyme conjointly, led by duly accredited founders. No further change occurred, it would seem, until the year 493, when, during the war between Skythes, ruling

king of Zankle, and Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegion, the former's generous but rash offer of hospitality to the fleeing exiles from Miletos received such base return at the hands of these treacherous strangers, that in the end Skythes, whom Herodotus calls "the most righteous of the Greeks," found himself banished to the court of King Darius; while Anaxilas had become undisputed master of Zankle as well as of his hereditary domain across the strait. The order of events now becomes somewhat uncertain; but it was only a few years after these disturbances that Anaxilas expelled his Samian fellow-conspirators, and imposed upon the city a new name, both to emphasize his complete overthrow of the ancient government, and to honor his remote Messenian ancestors. So that henceforth on its coinage and in its history Zankle is known as Messena, or later Messana,—the Dorian influence soon predominating over the Ionian.

In the fifth century Messana displayed even greater instability than most Sicilian towns, owing to the unsettled character of her population, which was continually varied by the influx of new and sometimes turbulent elements. Thus we find frequent and sudden reversals of policy as one party or the other gains the ascendant; the city now allied, now at enmity with neighboring towns; and when the great question arose, first favoring the Athenian alliance, then wholly devoted to Syracuse.

Threatened by Dionysios, who left in peace few West Hellenic cities of his time, and preserved from this attack by Carthage, not a new but always an unnatural ally for a Greek commonwealth, Messana was at one period the only free city in all Sicily; for with this exception the entire island was, about the year 400, ruled by one or other of these implacable foes. But with the new century appeared the carefully planned expedition of Himilkon, whose resistless forces, after regaining all that Dionysios had so slowly and laboriously wrested from the Carthaginians, next proceeded to the capture of Messana; a capture no sooner accomplished than the haughty shophet with solemn and impressive religious forms deliberately levelled to the ground this fair city, in mute yet expressive symbolism that thus relentlessly might he and his country be expected to deal with aught that bore the name of Greek.

This destruction of Messana in 396 terminated its civic coinage, so that although the city, restored by Dionysios, continued to display more or less activity during the remaining Greek period, its further history need not occupy our attention.

ZANKLE.

157. Drachm, wt. 92 grs. B. C. 550-500. (Pl. XV: 1.) Obv. ΔΑΝΚΛΕ Dolphin swimming to left, within a raised partly-open curving band, bordered on each side by dots. Rev. Same type and border, incuse, to right.

(From the Evans sale, 1898; No. 61.)

This, the earliest of the Zanklaian series, introduces their constant type, which, like that of the Syracusan tetradrachms, would symbolize the city's maritime situation. A dolphin, emblem of the flowing sea, sports within a sickle-shaped three-quarter circle, the curve of which of course denotes the tongue of land forming the harbor, just as the opening signifies its entrance. We should mark this inscription, which, in the rare nominative, shows that the actual form of the name, as handed down from the Sikels, was Dankle.

But that which excites the liveliest interest in connection with this coin is the fact that nowhere else in Sicily is there a reverse type which presents the incuse copy of its obverse. To find a similar peculiarity, we must return to Magna Graecia, where we have seen, in discussing the examples of this character shown on Plate I, that in the sixth century there existed a commercial league, composed of the leading Achaian cities, whose coinage was uniformly of this incuse pattern, and whose copious issues attest the general wealth and prosperity. Except in the case of Sybaris (No. 7), commerce between Greek cities was carried on for the most part by coasting vessels; and the present coin is clear evidence that Zankle, although a Chalkidic and hence an alien town, was deemed worthy of membership in the powerful Magna Graecian confederation. Her strong situation, commanding the narrowest passage of the dividing strait, must have occasioned this friendly action of the Italiot cities; all, and especially Kroton, eager to grasp a share of that lucrative Etruscan trade which had made Sybaris so wealthy and powerful.

Then, too, the peculiar circumstances of the coin's discovery, which fortunately have been so carefully preserved for us by Mr. Arthur Evans, and described by him at length in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1896, give this example an added interest. In the course of 1895 some workmen, who were engaged near modern Messina in constructing a tram line on the Catania road, while blasting rocks found a pot which contained a small hoard of Zanklaian and Naxian coins. Six were of this archaic incuse design, never before even suspected in connection with a Sicilian mint; while the early style of the remaining examples was such as to justify Mr. Evans in assigning for the date of their concealment the year 403, when we have seen the Samian and Milesian refugees so treacherously seizing the city.

Our coin thus strangely preserved, and no less strangely discovered, brings vividly before us the tumultuous scenes of twenty-four centuries ago.

Miletos, "the glory of Ionia," wealthy, populous, magnificent, the last hope of Hellenic freedom in Asia, had fallen; and its more energetic citizens, scorning to bear a foreign yoke, together with some Samians who equally despaired of their country, had as homeless fugitives sailed across the twin seas to hospitable Zankle. What must have been the alarm and consternation of the unsuspecting Zanklaians when these strangers, warmly welcomed as the invited guests of their absent king, straightway commenced the ruthless slaughter of the few warriors left behind to guard the city, and the indiscriminate seizure of the women and children for their slaves. What scenes of despairing flight and cruel separation must have followed! Was it then that some aged man escaping by night, and finding the pursuit too fierce, or his failing strength too weak for the burden, hid in this rock crevice his little pot filled with the savings of a life of toil? Or was such the deed of some strong young warrior who saw in this concealment just before an impending clash of arms, his one hope for the future fulfillment of his dreams, a happy life of tranquil ease amidst welcome family cares?

Or perhaps some survivor of this first massacre found his need for hurried departure when, as overlord, powerful Hippokrates burst upon the troubled scene, to banish with true tyrannical injustice the outraged king,

and to hand over the city formally to his betrayers. Or did this dire extremity arise some few years later when Anaxilas, deceiving and smiting friend and foe alike, seized the city for his own?

None can say; but that he whose fears or hopes were hidden with this hoard never again returned to claim his cherished treasure, is the one thing certain. So too we feel that those were days full of horror and despair, days when shameless greed and treacherous ingratitude formed the ruling motives of men's actions; and when even the most righteous cause was helpless as opposed to possession and unscrupulous power. Such is the illuminating glimpse into a dim and distant past which this long-forgotten relic of its ancient life affords the least imaginative student.

158. Drachm, wt. 89 grs. B. C. 500-493. (Pl. XV: 2.) Obv. ΔANK Dolphin swimming to left, within a raised partly-open curving band, on which are four square projections; border of dots. Rev. Incuse key pattern, within which, a scallop shell.

(From the Evans sale, 1898; No. 62.)

159. Drachm, wt. 91 grs. B. C. 500-493. (Pl. XV: 3.) Obv. ΔANKAE Similar to last, but without projections. Rev. Similar to last.

While these coins present the same general type of Zankle for their obverse, the former example shows a variation worthy of careful attention. On the curved band symbolizing the projecting tongue of land are four rectangular protuberances, in which Mr. Evans finds representations of the four forts which guarded the harbor; each fort being the special charge and privilege of one of the four tribes into which from their varied origin the city was divided. The reverse figure is probably made thus intricate without any peculiar meaning except as regards its shell, always a symbol of the sea's proximity.

The last example shows the "sickle" in its plainest form, and it is of pieces after this pattern that the usual and rather copious coinage of Zankle is composed. Examples of the fortification type are more or less rare; while of the incuse design only the six specimens from this Messina find are known.

We should add that, like other early Chalkidic colonies, Zankle followed in her coin weights the Aiginetic standard, and we thus find the three drachms just considered approximating to the maximum 97 grains of Aigina and the Islands.

MESSANA.

160. Tetradrachm, wt. 267 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 4.) Obv. Biga of mules walking to right, driven by bearded charioteer, seated; in exergue, olive leaf; border of dots. Rev. MEΞΞENION Hare running to right; border of dots.

161. Tetradrachm, wt. 266 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 5.) Obv. MEΞΞANA Biga of mules walking to right, driven by female charioteer (Messana); border of dots. Rev. MEΞΞANION Hare running to right; beneath, dolphin to right; border of dots. (From the Montagu sale, No. 113.)

162. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. B. C. 480-420. (Pl. XV: 6.) Obv. Similar to last, but mules crowned by flying Nike; and in exergue, olive leaf with fruit.

163. Tetradrachm, wt. 262 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Pl. XV: 7.) Obv. Similar to last, but to left, and with Nike crowning charioteer; while in exergue, two dolphins. Rev. MEΞΞANION Similar to last reverse, but beneath, head of Pan, to right.

164. Tetradrachm, wt. 260 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Pl. XV: 8.) Obv. Similar to last. Rev. MEΞΞANIΩN in exergue. Hare running to left; above, dove flying to left; beneath, stalk of barley.

(From the Wotoch sale, No. 234.)

We have already confessed to finding a certain amount of obscurity in the precise date and order of those calamitous events which produced a sudden cessation of the old Zanklaian coinage and the adoption of these issues so different in type and fabric; but there seems, as has also been shown in the historical sketch, good authority for attributing such a complete revolution to the doubly treacherous Anaxilas. As tyrant he would ordain for the conquered city this fresh coinage, on which were displayed both of his early Rhegine types: the biga of mules with which he had gained his Olympic victory, and the running hare.

That the mule should ever have been deemed worthy of participation in the great religious contests at Olympia seems to our modern ideas most

incongruous; and that the practice was indeed not wholly in harmony with Hellenic sentiment is shown by the fact that for barely more than half a century were such races included among the competitions. While the scornful refusal of Simonides to grant Anaxilas' request, that "the favored of the gods" should commemorate this victory with the customary ode, displays the poet's personal antipathy. And when at last his repugnance had been overcome by an unprecedented fee, it was as "the daughters of storm-footed horses" that the strains of his inspired lyre immortalized the lowly victors, doubtless more accustomed, then as now, to a less heroic if more forcible form of invocation.

Two reasons have been assigned for the presence of the reverse figure, and probably a combination of these influenced both Anaxilas' choice and the long continuance of the type. The hare, as the sacred emblem of the local god Pan, whose head with its goat's horn appears on No. 163, would naturally be chosen as the fitting symbol of the city's religious life; while on the other hand historians tell us that Anaxilas had from his Italian possessions introduced into the island this animal, so much esteemed as a delicacy by the ancients, and that he wished to record this praiseworthy action on his coinage. At any rate the figure appealed to the popular fancy, and the "Hares" of Messana, though far less numerous, were widely known in the same way as the "Owls" of Athens, or the "Colts" of Corinth.

My position regarding the designation of a coin's obverse and reverse having been so positively stated at the end of article XIII, it may seem that the choice of a simple biga for the obverse of this series of coins shows an inconsistency for which some explanation is due. But we must remember that the Olympic games were primarily a religious function and that a victory would impart even to the lowly *apênè* of mules such a sacred symbolism as to give its type the preference, even if the hare were surely to be considered an emblem of the great god Pan. And when in Nos. 5-8 of the plate a female charioteer appears, it is the nymph Messana, personification of the city, who guides the victorious mules, and by her divine or semi-divine presence gives still greater emphasis to the religious aspect of this type.

The dolphin on No. 161 recalls to our mind the earlier type of the city, with the same significance; while the clear logic of Mr. Arthur Evans in one of his Sicilian papers guides us amidst the uncertain mazes of vague hypothesis to a new yet natural conclusion regarding the figure of two dolphins plunging together, in the exergues Nos. 163 and 164. In their harmonious action he sees a reference to the alliance between Messina and Syracuse, and to the victory which thus combined they won over the Athenians in the sea-fight of 425. Upon certain coins of Syracuse also (Nos. 87 and 88) we found this device, which undoubtedly had there the same significance, although for want of space our text then contained no comment on either alliance or victory. The continuance of this figure on Messanian issues of a somewhat later period shows, not so much a lasting maritime connection as an unwillingness to alter recognized types.

This latter reverse (No. 164) is evidently modelled after the example examined by Mr. Evans in his paper (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1896, Plate VIII: 9), and on which he finds a new signature ANAN, which he completes as Ananios. His coin shows these letters in front of the dove, while our example displays, immediately behind the bird, a minute yet clear architectural pattern hardly visible in the reproduction, but which a study of the original plainly shows to be a flowing conventionalized form of these same letters.

Thus for nearly a century we see such issues continuing with little alteration; and throughout these two periods, wherein artistic improvement and at least a striving after perfection are visible in all other coinages of importance, the Messanian types, always so ordinary from an artistic standpoint, remain clear evidence of the low state of culture in this flourishing city. It is hard to realize that the engravers of Nos. 163 and 164 were actual contemporaries of Euainetos, Kimon, and all that wonderful group of artists whose productions at Syracuse, Kamarina and Katane have rightly received our unstinted praise.

165. Drachm, wt. 59 grs. B. C. 420-396. (Plate XV: 9.) Obv. Head of Pelorias to left, wearing wreath of barley leaves, ear-ring and necklace; in front, ΠΕΛΩΡΙΑΞ; border of dots. Rev. Pheraimon, naked but wearing a crested helmet

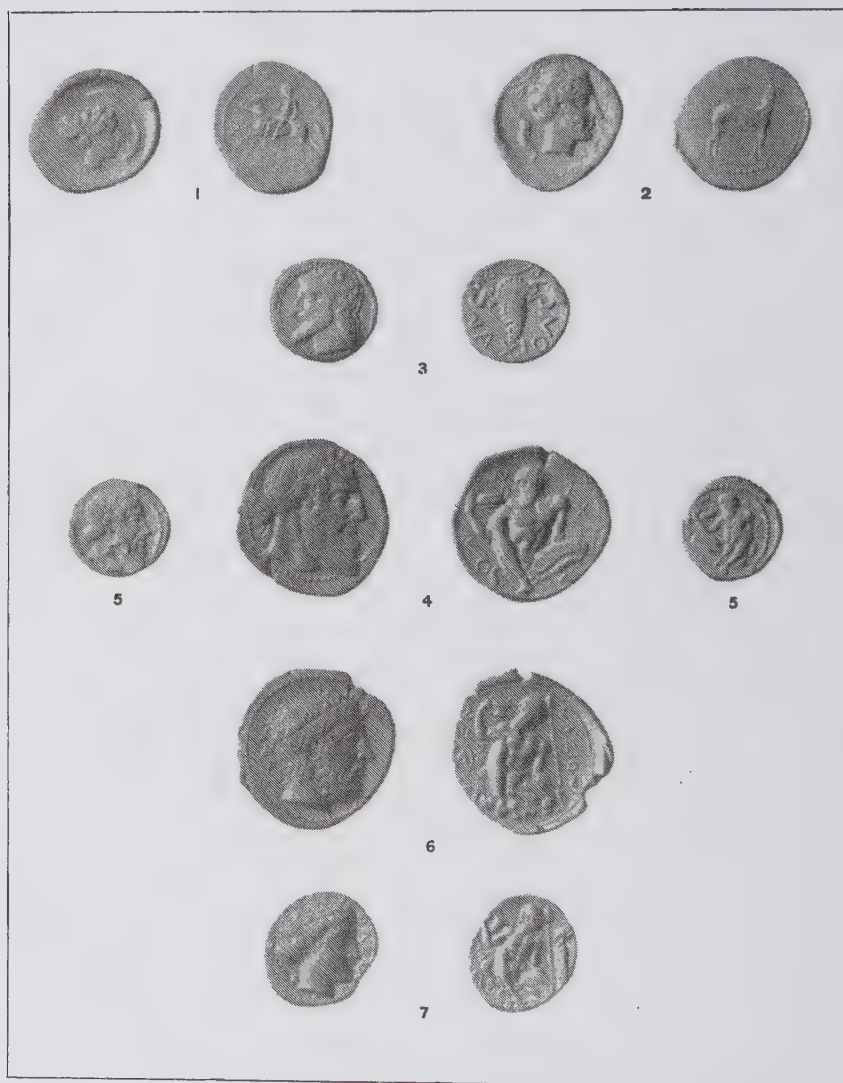
and armed with spear and shield, advancing to right in fighting attitude; around, ΦΕΡΑΙΜΩΝ; on right, π ; border of dots.

A few miles north of the city a low point stretching out even further towards the neighboring mainland and forming the real corner of Sicily, bore in early days the name Peloris. Dotted with little salt lakes wherein fish and wild fowl abounded, this sandy cape was always a favorite and profitable haunt of the citizens, who built here a temple to Poseidon; but who evidently considered the spot as sacred above all to the local nymph Pelorias — for so the coins which rescue her from oblivion would have the name.

With like mystical intent, the reverse depicts one of Aiolos' six sons, the fabled hero who, with his brother Androkles, ruled over the whole north coast of Sicily. That Pheraimon was a notable warrior, conquering and holding firmly his domain by force and arms, in those rude days when might was right, is clearly shown by his threatening posture.

The wide artistic influence of Syracusan issues is evident from the similarity in treatment between this head and the Persephone type of Euainetos, whose wonderful dekadrachms were undoubtedly, from this time on, exciting the admiration of more and more distant portions of the Greek world.





ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS FROM THE BENSON COLLECTION.

ANCIENT GREEK COINS

XVI

SICILY & (MOTYA NAXOS)

BY

FRANK SHERMAN BENSON



REVISED EDITION

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ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

XVI. SICILY, 6. (MOTYA, NAXOS.)



MOTYA now transports the scene of our investigations to a region little frequented by Greeks; for this ancient Phoenician foundation,—at first a simple trading post, as its name, “the spinning factory,” implies,—was situated on the extreme western coast of Sicily, well within the recognized confines of Carthaginian dominion. A city so far removed

from the multifarious rivalries and activities of Greek life would find no place in the present inquiry, were it not for a few coins whose Greek or Punic inscriptions distinguish them as the rare products of the Motyan mint.

And indeed Motya, although an important naval station for the Carthaginian power, is hardly mentioned in Sicilian history until early in the fourth century, when it was attacked by Dionysios, who here terminated a brilliant march of conquest through the hitherto inviolable territory of his hereditary foe. The siege which followed, ranking as it does among the most stubbornly contested of the world's history, gives to the island stronghold its principal interest.

And terrible indeed is this chronicle of furious assaults repulsed with fanatic bravery, and of endless hand-to-hand conflicts, pursued always to the

destruction of one or the other band of combatants. Even the final capture of the city's massive and desperately defended walls seemed no positive advantage gained, but rather only the prelude to a succession of disconnected, savage, mortal struggles, from battlemented house to house, from barricaded street to street, from hastily fortified square to square. Nor must we forget that Dionysios, besides urging on the fury of his attack with all the known appliances of ancient warfare, the heavy battering ram, the lofty movable wooden tower, the massive mole, here first made trial with terrible execution of his latest invention, the catapult, and from well-chosen sites hurled into the lofty city a continuous shower of death-dealing thunderbolts.

MOTYA.

166. Didrachm, wt. 124 grs. B. C. 420-397. (Pl. XVI: 1.) Obv. Head of nymph to right; around, three dolphins. Rev. Nude youth riding sideways on horse galloping to left: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, No. 358.)

167. Didrachm, wt. 126 grs. B. C. 420-397. (Pl. XVI: 2.) Obv. MOTYAION Head of nymph to right; behind, crayfish. Rev. Dog standing to right: border of dots.

(From the Bunbury sale, No. 358.)

In a small "barbarian" community such as this, one could hardly expect many evidences of a pure or well-developed Greek culture; so we are not surprised to discover that the types of Motya, far from presenting original compositions, are always copied with slight variation from one or another Sikeliot source.

Thus the obverse of the former coin is seen to be imitative of the Syracusan scheme already illustrated (Pl. VI: 8), while the reverse horseman finds his original in a type of less distant Himera. This group may either represent a youth boastfully parading his perfect balance by the easy attitude in which he sits his galloping bare-backed steed; or it may refer to a form of

contest at one time important enough to be included among the Olympic games, although, like the mule-car race, discontinued after flourishing for half a century. It was in this *καλπη* that the riders, at a certain spot in the course, had to leap from their horses at full speed, and running beside them, thus struggle to attain the goal.

The motif for both types of the second coin originated at Segesta, and since we intend in our next paper to consider at length the issues of this far more important city, no explanation of these Punic imitations need now be offered.



NAXOS, which gloried in the proud title of the most ancient Hellenic settlement in Sicily, owed its foundation to the chance that an adventurous sailor, one Theokles of Chalkis, helplessly driven before an easterly gale farther and farther amid the fabled terrors of unexplored seas, saw at last looming high before him a mountainous coast, in whose rugged extent his good fortune disclosed a safe and accessible harbor. This eastern shore of Sicily so favorably impressed the wanderer that, after regaining his native city, already famous for its colonial enterprise, he quickly organized an expedition, and in the year 735 returned to take formal possession. As oikist Theokles bestowed upon his new settlement a name which should do honor to certain of his companions who had sailed from the island of Naxos in the far Aegæan sea.

Increasing rapidly in wealth and power, this earliest of Sikeliot cities was able a few years later to found, near by, two colonies, Leontinoi and Katane, both, as we have seen, active and prominent factors in Sicilian history. The story of Naxos, resembling closely that of this second daughter city as already given, in part XIV, shows her first two centuries of peaceful independence closing with the tyranny of Hippokrates, — himself but a fore-runner of Gelon and Hieron. It was this latter despot who, still as in the

case of Katane, proceeded to banish the entire population of Naxos, although without extinguishing her name and identity.

Then soon after his death, again came freedom, lasting for three-quarters of a century, during which period we read of a fierce but unsuccessful attack on Naxos by Syracuse and Messana, and next of the citizens' enthusiastic support of their chosen allies, the Athenians. But this useless and ill-advised defiance of their Doric neighbor received a cruel punishment, for no sooner had Dionysios consolidated his power in Syracuse than he proceeded to the capture — made easy, it is true, by treason — of Naxos, whose final terrible doom was now accomplished. Not content with selling all her people into slavery, the ruthless conqueror decreed a complete destruction of the city, and then with grim irony handed over the desolated ruins to his Sikel allies, as representing the original owners of the land.

Thus in 402 vanished another Hellenic city.

NAXOS.

168. Drachm, wt. 83 grs. Before 480 B. C. (Pl. XVI: 3.) Obv. Head of Dionysos to left, with pointed beard and long hair, wearing wreath of ivy; border of dots between two plain circles. Rev. NAXION Bunch of grapes on stalk with two leaves.

This favored district, renowned for its fertility in the growth of the grape, would naturally cherish with peculiar care the worship of Dionysos; so that we recognize without surprise the god of the vine in this archaic ivy-crowned head, and acknowledge as well the fitness of the reverse type, a bunch of grapes pendant from their leafy branch. It must, however, be confessed that this worship may have been introduced by the first colonists, among whom were, as has been said, numerous adventurers from the older Naxos, one of the many spots claiming the somewhat doubtful honor of being the birth-place of the festive god. And we shall find later, on the first coin types of the Aegæan island, a kantharos, symbol of the same Dionysiac cult; while

the latest issues supplement this convivial design with a head of the wine-god himself.

The typically archaic character of our coin establishes as its early date in all probability the latter half of the sixth century; a determination strengthened by the Aiginetic weight-standard, which, as a colony of Chalkis, Naxos followed in these first issues.

169. Tetradrachm, wt. 264 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XVI: 4.) Obv. Head of bearded Dionysos to right, wearing wreath of ivy, and hair tied in knot behind: border of dots. Rev. NAXION Nude bearded Seilenos seated facing and to left, holding kantharos in right hand.

(From the Trist sale, No. 49.)

170. Drachm, wt. 66 grs. B. C. 461-415. (Pl. XVI: 5.) Obv. Similar to last. Rev. NAXION Similar to last.

(From the Hoffman sale.)

This tetradrachm is an exceptional coin; considered indeed by Mr. Percy Gardner "one of the most remarkable in existence." For, examining first the obverse, we find in the head of Dionysos a series of striking contradictions. A casual glance at the stiff formal treatment of eye, moustache and beard, would justify the belief that without doubt such a painstaking artist was just emerging from the archaic environment. But more detailed study shows an easy grace in the finish of hair and ivy-wreath, together with an assured boldness of attack in the difficult projection of beard and hair-knot beyond the dotted border, which are undoubted evidences that this engraver's experience and technique would not be out of place in the later years of the transitional period.

The same inconsistencies are found in the reverse. The figure, depicting aged Seilenos as the shameless embodiment of unrestrained bestial indulgence, is modelled with a strict fidelity to nature, a studied if exaggerated treatment of the muscles, and a masterly foreshortening of his difficult posture, which would all presuppose an advanced artistic period. While on the

other hand we are confronted by the most patent archaisms; such as the representation of the body facing while the head is in profile, and the fact that the inscription still clings to the early χ instead of the later Ξ .

My own thoughtful judgment must style the coin archaistic, and as to date would place the designer towards the end of his possible orbit. Thus I prefer to consider the archaisms he has displayed, as simulated, and the result either of policy or affectation. Neither quality is unexampled in the artistic temperament, even of the present day; and designed stiffness seems far more probable than precocious excellence.

Mr. Gardner states the unusual and interesting fact that all the known examples of this Seilenos are products of a single die; which makes our uncertainty only the more trying.

171. Tetradrachm, wt. 263 grs. B. C. 415-403. (Pl. XVI: 6.) Obv. Head of bearded Dionysos to right, wearing stephane decorated with ivy-wreath: border of dots. Rev. $\text{NA}\Xi\text{ION}$ Nude bearded Seilenos seated facing and to left, holding *kantharos* in right hand and *thyrsos* in left; on left, ivy growing: plain border.

(From the Montagu sale, No. 119.)

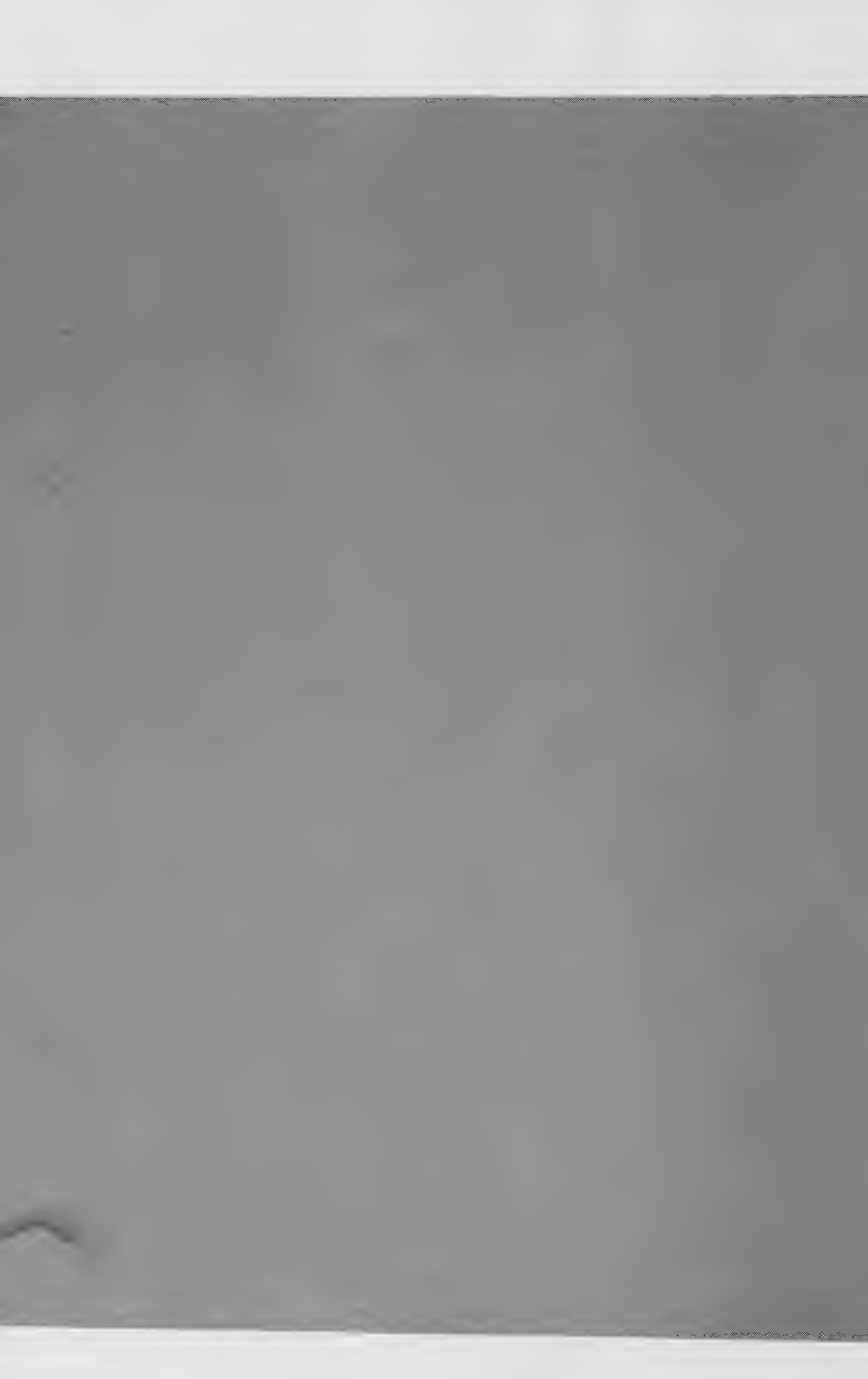
Still the same characteristic types, but now softened and elaborated by the skillful hand of a later and more accomplished technician, who has made his work the masterpiece of Naxian issues. The head, a composition of genuine distinction, is however not wholly pleasing, with its somewhat sensual features, refined to the verge of effeminacy, and its luxuriant curling locks, which show the profuse use of those unguents so dear to southern races. A charming touch is however displayed in the delicately twisting vine branch which transforms the rather severe stephane into a graceful adornment.

The reverse is even more highly finished, although of course merely a development of the older scheme. Indeed the constant adherence of Naxian engravers to this figure, in spite of a pose technically so difficult, gives plausibility to the suggestion that perhaps somewhere in the city there stood a popular and venerated statue of similar design. Here is visible the same

advance in treatment as in the case of the head. The attitude has become less constrained; while the muscles, more relaxed and supple, show no exaggeration, and have become properly subordinated. As we study the naturalism apparent in the growing vine, in the little hillock from which it springs, and in the thyrsos, where both the pine-branch staff and the pine-cone head are so clearly defined, we realize at once that the inspiration of this scheme is found primarily in the school of painting. This stylistic influence indeed is evident in many Sicilian coins (Plates XII: 9; XIII: 3, etc.), although its domination of an entire class will only be seen later when we come to the study of Cretan issues.

172. Didrachm, wt. 127 grs. B. C. 415-403. (Plate XVI: 7.) Obv. NAEIQN Head of Apollo to right, laureate; behind, laurel-leaf with berry: border of dots. Rev. Similar to last, and on right, term.

The obverse of this most rare and interesting coin perpetuates the worship of a far more worthy member of the Pantheon than the usual civic types; for it displays the radiant laurel-crowned head of the noblest of all Greek deities, divine Apollo. It was his revered sanctuary, and the solemn rites and ceremonies performed therein to him in that incarnation of Archegetes, already found so powerful at Katane (No. 151), which made Naxos the recognized centre of all Sikeliot religious life. In a land of such ceaseless change and activity as Sicily, and with a people always so animated by an adventurous spirit as was the Greek, a most natural and indeed almost spontaneous cult would be that of the Leader whose watchful guidance a solemn prayer could secure for any new undertaking, and of the Founder whose powerful aid could be hopefully invoked for a favorable ending of each hazardous venture.



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